

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the present amendment and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-9 and 21-27 are pending. Claims 11-20 were withdrawn by the outstanding Office Action. In the present amendment, Claims 1-9 are currently amended, Claims 10-20 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and new Claims 21-27 are added. Support for the present amendment can be found in the original specification, for example, at page 8, line 26 to page 9, line 27 and in Figure 4. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-5 and 7-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a),(e) as anticipated by Schneider et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,364,957, hereinafter “Schneider”); and Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Schneider in view of Wicker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,464,843, hereinafter “Wicker”).

Initially, Applicants would like to thank Examiner Zervigon for the courtesies extended to Applicants’ representative during the interview held on July 26, 2009, at which time the outstanding issues in the Office Action were discussed. Specifically, Applicants’ representative presented claim amendments and arguments corresponding to those presented herein. Thus, the present amendment is hereby submitted for formal consideration.

Turning now to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a),(e) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of these rejections and traverse these rejections, as discussed below.

Amended Claim 1 recites:

A focus ring assembly, comprising:

a focus ring including a step receiving surface positioned on a substrate holder and located below a backside surface of a

substrate, and an outer radial lip surface positioned radially outward from a peripheral edge of the substrate; and

a secondary focus ring positioned on the step receiving surface of the focus ring, the secondary focus ring including an inner radial edge surface positioned radially outward from the peripheral edge of the substrate,

wherein said focus ring is configured to couple to the substrate holder which is configured to support the substrate exposed to a process in a processing system, and said secondary focus ring is configured to reduce deposition of material from said process on the backside surface of said substrate.

As can be seen in the exemplary embodiment shown in Figure 4, the focus ring includes a step receiving surface positioned on a substrate hold and an outer radial lip surface positioned radially outward from a peripheral edge of the substrate. Further, a secondary focus ring is positioned on a step receiving surface and a secondary focus ring includes an inner radial edge surface positioned radially outward from the peripheral edge of the substrate. Thus, the secondary focus ring does not support the substrate such that the substrate is cantilevered upon the substrate holder. However, the secondary focus ring still reduces deposition of material on a backside of the substrate. Accordingly, the focus ring can be adapted via the secondary focus ring to be used with a greater variety of substrate sizes while still reducing backside deposition of the substrate. It is respectfully submitted that the cited references do not disclose or suggest every feature recited in amended Claim 1.

Schneider describes a support assembly 30 for supporting a substrate 15 including a collar 130 that comprises a clamp ring 200 having one or more slits 150 and a second ring 210 on which the clamp ring 200 is positioned.¹ As can be seen in Figure 6, the clamp ring 200 extends underneath the substrate 15 to fill the gap behind the substrate 15, thereby

¹ See Schneider, at column 9, lines 20-23 and 64-65 and in Figure 6.

supporting the substrate 15. Further, Schneider describes the clamp ring 200 as clampingly engaging an outer surface such as the perimeter surface 363 of the dielectric 45.²

However, it is respectfully submitted that Schneider does not disclose or suggest “a secondary focus ring positioned on the step receiving surface of the focus ring, the secondary focus ring including an inner radial edge surface positioned radially outward from the peripheral edge of the substrate,” as recited in amended Claim 1.

Instead, as discussed during the interview, the clamp ring 200 extends underneath the substrate such that the inner radial edge surface of the clamp ring 200 is not positioned radially outward on the peripheral edge of the substrate. Accordingly, the clamp ring 200 does not allow a space between the substrate and the clamp ring 200. Thus, the clamp ring 200 described in Schneider is not the claimed secondary focus ring.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Schneider does not disclose or suggest every feature recited in amended Claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claim 1, and all claims dependent thereon, as anticipated by Schneider be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 6 as unpatentable over Schneider in view of Wicker, it is noted that Claim 6 is dependent on Claim 1 and thus is believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 1. Further, it is respectfully submitted that Wicker does not cure the above-noted deficiencies of Schneider. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claim 6 as unpatentable over Schneider in view of Wicker be withdrawn.

New Claims 21-27 are added by the present amendment. Support for new Claims 21-27 can be found in the original specification, for example, in Figure 4 and in the corresponding description. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added.

² See Schneider, at column 9, lines 27-30 and in Figure 6.

It is noted that new Claims 21-27 depend on independent Claim 1, and thus are believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 1. Further, it is noted that Claim 26 recites that “the secondary focus ring includes an upper surface that is substantially planar with a top surface of the substrate.” Accordingly, as can be seen in Figure 4, the top surface of both the substrate and the secondary focus ring are substantially coplanar. Thus, the secondary focus ring can help prevent deposition on the peripheral edge of the substrate. As can be seen in Figure 6, the top surface of the clamp ring 200 and the substrate 15 are not substantially coplanar. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 26, and Claim 27 which depends thereon, further patentably define over the cited reference.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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